

Promises and Friends by coffeeandcontemplationinthe80s

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Summary: Set just after the snowball, Mike and Eleven are thirteen going on fourteen and figuring out how a romance works when you're still young. Whilst also dealing with parents that disapprove of dating at a young age, annoying friends that will continue to harass them and helping another couple admit they like each other. A/N I am rating this as Mature in case of future events.

1. Chapter 1 Snowball Sleepover

A/N: First attempt in a few years so please cut me some slack. Hope you enjoy!

Chapter 1 Snowball Sleepover

Eleven pulled away from Mike a smile reaching across her face.

"Erm El. If you need me to explain anything about what just happened I can..."

"Mike." She told him in her soft tone. "I know what a kiss is. I learnt a lot in the last year. Mostly from TV. I know that what we may have is a roman."

Mike chuckled at the error she made. "You mean romance El?"

She nodded simply before a worried look appeared across her face. "Will we have a romance?"

Mike's lips trembled with nerves. He knew he cared for her so much and that his feelings were real. But they were only thirteen going on fourteen. If he decided to make her his girlfriend which he desperately wanted to, their parents would not be thrilled. They would say they were too young and that dating was for when you were older. But Mike knew he was ready now and he was sure that she was too. But did she really understand what it all meant? Before he could even voice any of his concerns, they were interrupted by the rest of the gang wandering over.

"El!" The boys yelled as they all engaged into a big bear hug.

"Hi guys." She told them.

Max clung to the back of the crowd. Since Eleven's return and frosty reception to Max she didn't believe that Eleven had warmed to her presence. The rest of the gang could sense this too and they could only hope that once they spent more time together Eleven would see how great Max was and welcome her into the group.

"So you guys totally just missed Nancy dancing with me." Dustin bragged as he ran a finger through his crazy up do. "She clearly digs me."

"As if Dustin. She's totally fucking Jonathan now!" Lucas pointed out with a grin. Will pulled a grimace at the thought of his brother being intimate with someone.

"What's fucking?" Eleven asked puzzled.

The gang all looked around awkwardly, they forgot that at times she was not in the know about certain things. Desperately wanting to avoid a sex education chat, Mike changed the subject.

"So after the Snowball I'm having a big sleepover. I think Hopper said you could come Eleven? All the gang together again in the basement."

Eleven nodded in agreement.

"Ok but no sucking face you guys." Max told them as she pointed towards both of them.

"Whatever Max. We all saw you and Lucas making out I think we should be watching out for you two." Dustin pointed out as he began to make kissing noises at them.

Max turned a deep shade of red before she quickly rushed off for some punch. The rest of the gang swiftly joined her and Mike and Eleven's conversation was forgotten. The rest of the night passed in a whirl, they sat and talked by the round tables and danced in a group to the songs. Occasionally Mike and Eleven would sneak off for a dance alone but would often be interrupted by one of their friends. Soon the night was over and after the last sounds of *I Melt With You* were finished, the gang all ventured outside to await their lift back to Mike's. Jonathan drove Will, Max and Eleven whilst Nancy drove Dustin, Lucas and Max home in her parents car. Once back to Mike's with all their things Nancy who was babysitting whilst her parents were away promptly told them to go down to the basement and keep quiet at this late hour. It was a weekend and only ten o'clock as Mike pointed out but as Jonathan ventured into the house with the girls

and his brother it became clear that the two of them intended to be left alone for the rest of the evening. The boys decided to change into their pyjamas in Mike's room and gave the girls privacy in the basement to change. Max felt very awkward being left alone with Eleven. She had no female friends and had no experience of dealing with other girls who disliked her. But she also felt a sense of sympathy for Eleven and her lack of life experience. As she grabbed her bag from the sofa she turned to Eleven who simply sat on the sofa clutching her backpack to her chest.

"Do you want some privacy? I can change in the bathroom if you want." She suggested.

Eleven shook her head unsure. Max let out a sign. Annoyed at the tension. Now was the time to tackle the issue.

"Look El. I hope you're happy for me to call you El? I know you may find being around a new girl a threat, but I'm really not a threat. I actually like Lucas, I am not interested in Mike if that's what you're worried about? And I really hope you can accept me at some point and maybe be friends. Because before I met the guys, I've never really had proper friends. I've always been alone."

"No friends?" Eleven asked her with a sad look in her eye.

"No." Max admitted as she came to sit beside Eleven. "My Mom she moved around a lot before she met my Step-Dad. So I never really got the chance to make any friends, I was always the new girl."

"I understand Max. I never had friends before. I only had Papa. And he was bad. I'm sorry. " She told her as she leaned her hand towards Max. "Friends?"

Max took her hand smiling. "Yes El. Friends."

There was a long pause of silence before anyone spoke again.

"Max." She said. "I'm shy."

"Shy about what El?" She asked puzzled.

"About being in my PJs. What if Mike thinks I am not pretty any

more?"

Max chuckled softly. "No one cares about people's PJs El. Everyone wears them, even Mike. You have nothing to be shy or worried about. I promise."

El nodded with a smile before getting up and walking towards the bathroom to change.

Max was right, there was nothing for her to be embarrassed about her pink checked PJ bottoms and matching top were nothing to joke over in fact they were less embarrassing than Max's oversized black David Bowie shirt and grey shorts. Eventually the boys came down and they decided to put on E.T, as Elle had never watched many films. They spread across the room strategically, Max sat next to Lucas on the sofa with Will on the end feeling awkwardly like the third wheel and Dustin, Eleven and Mike sat on the floor underneath blankets. Snacks were sorted to, Dustin had ensured it. A huge bowl of popcorn sat amongst them with mountains of red vines and a few eggos on a plate specifically for Eleven. As the film began Mike clumsily placed his arm over Eleven's shoulder, she smiled at him as she gently cuddled onto his shoulder. Mike felt more at ease, happy that she seemed comfortable with the affection. This didn't go unnoticed by the rest of the group as they all looked at each other with smirks. Two hours later the film was over, the snacks were eaten and the gang were beginning to look sleepy, Will in particular who had fallen asleep on the end of the sofa. Since the defeat of the demagorgan's and closing the gate to the upside down Will seemed to sleep often and easily for the first time in a long time. They all decided that it was time to go to bed, then came the awkward decision of sleeping arrangements. This was the first time the boys had integrated girls into their sleepover and it brought a slight blush to all their faces.

"Will's asleep on the sofa already so just boost his feet up and he can sleep on there." Dustin said gesturing to Lucas and Max who got up and carefully placed Will's feet onto the sofa. "Why don't you and Max hunker up in the corner by the sofa? I'll take the arm chair and Eleven can sleep in the fort with Mike."

"Separately. " Lucas insisted. "Me and Max have separate sleeping bags."

"Do we have separate sleeping bags?" Eleven asked Mike as she looked at him with a smile.

"No. We have Blankets near the fort." Mike told her.

"Behave guys." Dustin said to them all with a wink as he headed to his corner of the room.

Dimming out the lights they all headed to their designated areas. Mike tucked the blankets into Eleven as she began to settle into her bed for the night before he laid down beside it in his own blankets.

"Night El." He whispered.

"Night Mike."

They hunkered down into their blankets. But Mike was so uncomfortable he laid there wide awake. Thoughts running through his mind. In his teenage dreams he never believed that the girl of his dreams would be sleeping over at his house, closely beside him. All it would take is for him to shuffle closer and they would be touching. But Mike did not want to push his luck by betraying Hopper's trust or do anything Eleven was not happy with. Their earlier conversation also worried him. He had never answered her question about them being in a romance. He desperately wanted to answer, but then they'd been interrupted. Perhaps he would get a chance to discuss it with her tomorrow before Hopper came to pick her up? He glanced at his electronic watch it had only been fifteen minutes since they had all decided to sleep, but judging by the sounds of Dustin's loud nasally snore and the collective deep breathing everyone else was asleep except him.

"Mike." A voice whispered close by. He jumped up looking over at El a look of concern on his face.

"El. Are you OK?"

"I can't sleep. Would you come here with me and snuggle?"

"You know what snuggling is right?" He asked her with a serious expression on his face.

"Yes. I think it would help me sleep." She replied.

With a mutual understanding Mike shifted over as she moved to make room for him and he got under the blankets. Unsure of what to do he quickly placed a hand gently onto the small of her back wrapping his arms round her, she quickly mirrored his movements. They were lying face to face and their noses were inches from touching. They smiled at each other sweetly. The whole time Mike was working very hard to keep his feelings in check and his urges and sexual thoughts to himself. These thoughts were soon distracted by Eleven talking to him.

"Mike. I need to know something."

"What is it Eleven?" He asked.

"Mike. Dad, Hopper. He explained about how when people like each other they may show it with ways of affection. He said that when people have a romance it's usually when they're older. But Mike, I like you now. So does this mean no romance?"

"El I like you too. A lot." He started. "And well you're Dad. He's saying what he believes to be true. But I don't agree El. I like you and we have something some people our age have never experienced. I want you to be my girlfriend El. You understand what I am saying?"

"I do Mike." She told him sweetly. "I want you to be my boyfriend."

It was then that they shared their second kiss. It was as quick and sweet as the first one and this they were cuddled close together. After he pulled away he gave her a quick kiss on the forehead before they eventually fell asleep huddled into each others arms.

A/N: Hope this was good for a first chapter. I will be adding more chapters as quick as I can and there will be more Millevan and some Lucas and Max coming up. Please rate and review with any thoughts.

2. Chapter 2 We're Together

Chapter 2 We're Together

The next morning Mike awoke stunned at first as to where he was until he suddenly realised that Eleven was cuddled against him, her head leaning on his chest. He could feel the little sighs of her breath and her scent so sweet and flowery floated under his nose. He smiled, this was the best moment and he never wanted it to end. Suddenly there was a loud screech filling the room, Eleven suddenly jerked awake and the two of them sat bolt up to see what all the noise was about. Will was lying in a heap on the floor and had landed directly onto Max's legs. The two of them burst into laughter as they watched the look of horror on Max's face as she was rudely awoken.

"Will get off me!"

"I am sorry Max. I am sorry. I fell off the sofa!"

"Well just get up!" Max shrieked.

Will quickly managed to lift himself off her and safely back onto the sofa. Once awake he looked confusingly towards Mike and Eleven burrowed under the fort.

"Mike you're under the fort?" He questioned.

Max and Lucas suddenly bolted up to look in their direction, Dustin had somehow slept through the noise. They all looked at them taken aback.

"Did you two sleep together and cuddle?" Lucas asked nosily.

"None of your business Lucas!" Mike shouted in annoyance as he got up from the blankets. "This is between me and El."

"But you cuddled with...a girl." Lucas said his eyes wide with shock. "What if Nancy had come downstairs and found you, you would have been in deep shit!"

"Yeah man." Will added. "You know the rules with girls. We could

have all been in trouble."

"I think we should all just leave it. This really isn't a big deal." Max said trying to play mediator.

"It's fine." Eleven added as she stood beside Mike. "He's my boyfriend and I am his girlfriend cuddling is OK."

"You two are together?" Lucas asked puzzled.

"Yeah. We're together." Mike confirmed.

The gang all just looked around at each other and simply smiled in response. Then suddenly from the corner, Dustin let out the longest yawn as he bolted up from the chair.

"So what did I miss?"

This caused the rest of the group to burst into laughter, whilst Dustin just sat there looking even more confused.

Once they had all composed themselves, they shared the news with Dustin who was not in the slightest bit surprised that Mike and Eleven were officially together. They had both liked each other since the day they met so it was really inevitable. It was decided that once breakfast, Eggos and bacon provided by Jonathan and Nancy were eaten and finished they would spend the rest of the morning playing in the snow. The gang all gained permission from their parents to stay for the rest of the day and as Hopper was working till later Eleven was also allowed to stay but was under strict orders to remain at the Wheelers residence. Despite the upside down being gone, Eleven was still expected to keep a low profile for the next year. Therefore, they were under strict instructions to remain in the Wheeler's backyard. They decided to make snowmen as Eleven had never done this before, even Nancy and Jonathan joined them to keep an eye on things. The gang decided to team up and make separate snowmen, Lucas desperately wanted to work with Max so he would have a chance to discuss their kiss at the snowball but she promptly announced that she would be teaming up with El to get to know her more. So the teams were El and Max, Dustin and Lucas and Mike and Will.

As Max began to roll a piece of snow to make the body of the snowman she instructed Eleven to do the same who willingly followed Max's lead. Once they had two perfect mounds of snow they began to form their snowman, as they did Eleven took the opportunity to talk to Max.

"Max. Why did you team up with me? What about Lucas?" Eleven asked in a curious tone.

"Well because I wanted to talk to you some more. And I didn't feel like being on Lucas's team." She explained with a grimace.

"Why?" She asked her confused.

"Well because we kissed yesterday and we haven't talked since. I know he's bound to mention it." Max explained.

"Was the kiss bad?" Eleven asked her.

"No. It was nice. " Max told her. "I just don't know if it's a good idea."

"Why don't you think it's a good idea?"

Max fell silent as she pretended to be patting the snowmen avoiding the question. Eleven was about to ask her again until she was distracted by a big ball of snow falling right on to their snowman.

"Snowball fight!" The boys yelled as they came charging towards the girls hands laden with snow.

Max let out a scream as she shouted at Eleven to follow her. She went traipsing off ready to take them down with snow. Mike came charging over to Will knocking him to the ground as he ventured off to take Max and Eleven down as well, but he was surprised as he looked around and couldn't find Eleven with her. Searching around from all his friends flinging snow backward and fore wards, he still could not find her. Mike began to panic as he began to call out her name. Will sensed his worry by the look on his face as he got back onto his feet.

"Mike what's wrong?" He asked.

"It's El I can't see her!. I think she's wandered off." Mike said worried.

"We'll find her." Will told her. "Everyone stop. We can't see El."

Suddenly they all stopped and began to look around frantically shouting her name repeatedly.

"El!" Mike called out. "Where are you?"

Suddenly he could hear a cry and a voice call out. "Mike! Mike! I am here. Behind the snowman."

Mike suddenly ran towards the snowman her and Max had been building. He found her hunched behind it knees brought up to her chest, tears streaming down her face a look of terror in her eyes.

"El!" He yelled as he crouched beside her and pulled her into his arms. "What's wrong? Why did you hide? What's making you so upset?"

"Fight." She moaned. "The fight. Snowball fight bad."

At this point the gang had all joined them. Looking alarmed to see Eleven so upset.

"The snowball fight? I am sorry El. It's meant to be for fun, we didn't mean to scare you. It's OK you're safe."

The rest of the gang decided that it would be best to go back to making snowmen whilst Mike helped her calm down. Once he explained it to her more she understood, but the initial fear remained with her for a while after. Eventually they all ventured back inside for cocoa and cookies, at this point Mike's parents had come home and his Mom had baked for them all. The rest of the afternoon was spent with the guys playing Dungeons and Dragons whilst Max and Eleven sat watching TV, occasionally making conversation. Then one by one they all began to go home. First Max left, followed swiftly by Lucas who was annoyed that Max had left. Then Jonathan came down to tell Will he was driving him home and that left Dustin, Eleven and Mike. Eleven and Mike were cuddled up on the sofa whilst Dustin sat in the armchair watching them with a sickened look.

"Fine. I get the hint. I'll leave. Don't have much else to do but...never mind. I'll just go home and watch stupid soaps with my Mom. That's always fun!" He complained as he got up.

Mike and Eleven both looked at each other with a smirk. "Bye Dustin" Mike called to him.

"Ah shut up." He yelled as he traipsed up the stairs. Once they heard the door slam shut, Mike and Eleven both looked at each other with eyebrows raised. "Kiss?" She said with excitement.

Mike nodded as she pulled herself onto his lap. They eagerly pressed their lips together finding that the more they kissed the more they liked it. This time Eleven decided to get adventurous and show off the knowledge she had learnt from all those soap operas and boldly but lightly stroked her tongue against his as their kiss deepened. Once they broke free for air, Mike looked at her with a playful grin.

"Where did you learn to do that?" He asked in amazement.

"TV." She admitted with a blush.

He gently stroked her cheek with his hand. "Don't be embarrassed. It was good. Very good. In fact do it again?"

She nodded eagerly as she practically threw herself into his arms. Their kissing got more passionate and heated as Mike pushed her lightly back onto the sofa so they were lying, him on top of trying not to bear any of his weight on her. Mike felt a weird sensation stir from within him as he desperately tried to hold back from what his body was insisting on, any longer and he would be struggling to stop a certain part of him from popping up. This was always a constant worry when they were pressed together like this, but once again he didn't want to scare her away.

"MIKE!"

The sounds of a distant yelling from upstairs broke them apart. It was his mother calling down the stairs.

"Mike, Hopper is here to pick up El!"

They looked at each other with disappointment on their faces at the realisation that the next time they saw each other was yet to be decided.

"I best go." El said sadly as she grabbed her bag. "I'm really going to miss you Mike."

"I'll miss you too. But we'll find a way to see each other and I'll call you every day if I can. We wont be apart this time." Mike told her.

"Promise?" She asked.

Mike gave her a quick kiss. "I promise."

There was further yelling from upstairs this time it was Hopper. They decided it would be best to wander upstairs before he came down to them. Once upstairs, they found Hopper stood in the kitchen his uniform on and his hat on the side as he sipped a cup of coffee and chatted to Mike's Mom, Karen.

"What were you two doing?" Karen asked. "Took a while for you two to get up here."

Before Mike had a chance to babble a lie, Eleven accidentally beat him to it.

"Kissing." She said with a smile. Mike's hand fell into his face. She was too innocent and naive to understand that some things were to be kept private and hidden from your parents.

"WHAT!" Hopper yelled as he banged his coffee cup down on the kitchen worktop. "She's 13 years old Wheeler!"

"They both are." Karen reminded Hopper. "Mike what is going on between you two. I understand your fond of each other, but kissing is for when you're dating. "

"We are together!" Eleven announced. "We like each other."

Mike looked at her this time he was not embarrassed, but he admired her courage to stand up to their parents. He took his hand in hers as they stood beside each other.

"Yeah we like each other and we are together. Boyfriend and girlfriend. Now we know you're opinions on this, but whether you approve or not we are still going to see each other, talk and spend time together and yes occasionally there will be a bit of kissing. So you can keep us apart and we will sneak around to see each other. Or you can accept it and let us see each other under your watchful eyes and rules."

Karen and Hopper both looked at each other then back at the kids before Hopper let out a deep sigh.

"OK. But they're will be rules! And sleepovers will remain as joint ones with you're other friends. No staying out late and no wandering around town without a planned event."

"Yes. " Karen agreed. "And weekdays during a school week, you're homework will be done before you see each other."

Eleven and Mike both nodded in agreement.

"Right. El time to go!" Hopper said pointing to the door.

El leaned over to kiss Mike's cheek.

"Now El!"

"See you later Mike." She said with a smile.

Mike watched as they went out the door, desperately hoping that now they left his Mum wasn't going to be asking a million questions and laying down rules. But instead she simply ruffled his hair and wandered off into the living room to watch TV with his Dad. That night Mike slept peacefully, happy that Eleven was now in his life and finally his girlfriend.

A/N: Hope enjoyed this chapter. Future chapters will span over more time but I had to do the time frame on these two close together! I will have the next chapter up and running soon! :P

3. Chapter 3 Christmas Fun

Chapter 3 Christmas Fun

A week had passed since the sleepover with the group and Mike and Eleven were apart once again. There had been a few phone calls back and fourth but it wasn't the same as seeing each other in person. Mike was off school for the Christmas break and though he had spent the majority of his week with Dustin, Will and Lucas playing Dungeons and Dragons or at the arcade it didn't fill the void of not seeing Eleven. Most of the time he was moody with his friends especially Lucas who was also in a mood about his lack of contact from Max. Even more so, Mike had began to take his frustrations out on his family. Snide remarks were thrown at Nancy with every joke she made about his girlfriend, his parents were snapped at, in fact the final straw for his parents had been when he had yelled at his three year old sister Holly for breaking one of his figurines. Karen Wheeler threatened her son with a grounding if the behaviour continued. Of course, she understood he missed Eleven and wanted to be around her, which is why she had a cunning plan in mind.

It was Christmas Eve morning and Hopper was not due at the station that day, he had took the day off to plan a perfect first Christmas for himself and Eleven. Hopper had gone into great detail about the story of Christmas and the traditions with Eleven the month before, she had been giddy with excitement at the thought of presents and food. Excited for the day ahead Hopper had awoken early to make a special breakfast for Eleven, a tower of Eggos with squirty cream and strawberries and chocolate chips all piled on top. Hopper looked down on his work proudly. It was at that moment that Eleven ventured out of her room, still dressed in her red checked dressing gown wiping sleep from her eyes.

"Morning kid!" He chirped. "Here's you're breakfast."

Eleven looked at the waffle tower he presented her with. She gave him a small smile and muttered thank you as she took a seat at the table and tucked into her breakfast. Hopper was baffled he had hoped she would have had a more enthusiastic reaction to her surprise breakfast. Instead he decided to start the itinerary for the day.

"So today will be a family day. After breakfast we're going to decorate the tree, then we're going to light a fire outside toast some marshmallows make smores. Then I thought we could watch my favourite Christmas film, It's a Wonderful Life. How does that sound El?"

"Cool." She said with little enthusiasm. Hopper couldn't help but feel a bit hurt. He knew it was juvenile but he wanted this day to be so special. It was their first holiday as a family. But he had noticed that her mood was very low over the last week. The moping in front of the TV everyday, the hysterical mood swings when he mentioned staying in and keeping a low profile and her lack of conversation. It was clearly all to do with the Wheeler boy. She missed him and he understood but he didn't like it. He hadn't been prepared for dealing with a boy this soon. His instincts were to be defensive and unwelcoming but for her sake he was trying to be reasonable.

"Well eat up. Then go get dressed." He ordered. Eleven rolled her eyes in response as Hopper ventured over to the kitchen. Suddenly the phone rang, turning his back to Eleven he picked up the phone desperately hoping it wasn't work.

"Hopper here!"

"Oh. Hi Hop. It's me...Joyce."

"Hi Joyce." He said a note of surprise in his voice. Joyce had not spoken to him since the night of the snowball and he was pleased to hear from her. "What can I do for you?"

"Well. Karen Wheeler is having a Christmas eve get together tonight and she suggested I invite you and El."

"Well that's nice but El should be keeping a low profile, there may be too many people there. It's risky." He explained.

"Well what if I could disguise her as my niece. Elie, And she would be with her friends and Mike mostly in the basement. I know her friends are missing her, Mike especially!"

Hopper paused for a minute looking back over at Eleven, a bleak look

on her face. Despite his plans for the day and his longing for their first family traditions he also couldn't stand to see her looking so miserable.

"Hey Joyce. How about I bring her to yours and you can sort her out and Jonathan I'm assuming if he's taking Will can take her. Then I'll pick her up later."

"Ah that's great Hop! I know Will and the boys will be ecstatic. Why don't you bring her round at about 6:00pm."

"That's great Joyce. So I'll see you later..." Joyce suddenly cut him off.

"Hop wait! How about later, whilst the kids are at the Wheelers Christmas party. Do you want to order some Pizza and watch a film? I don't fancy the Christmas party and you'll have to wait for the kids anyway so..." Her voice seemed rushed and nervous.

A small smile spread across Hopper's face. This was Joyce Byers attempts at asking him out and he was more than happy to accept.

"Absolutely. Like you said got to wait for the kids anyway. See you later Joyce."

Hopper placed the phone back on the receiver and turned round to Eleven ready to deliver the news that was sure to put a smile back on her pretty face.

"Right kid new plan. We are doing all the things I suggested and then at 6:00pm we are going to Joyce's and she going to get you ready for a party at the Wheelers house."

A hopeful look appeared on Eleven's face. "I get to see Mike?"

"Yes." Hopper told her wagging his hand defiantly. "But I will be picking you up promptly at 10:00pm!"

"Oh Daddy! Thank you!" She squealed as she ran over to him and burrowed him in to a hug.

"You're welcome. Now will you please get dressed so we can decorate

the damn tree!" He instructed patting her back.

Eleven rushed off to her room with joy and Hopper smiled as he watched her. Meet her halfway, he thought to himself and compromise.

The old grandfather clock struck 7:00pm in the upstairs of the Wheeler household and guests had quickly began to arrive for the annual Wheeler Christmas Eve party. Nancy remained upstairs helping her mother prepare snacks, whilst Mike sulked downstairs in the basement picking irritably at the sleeves of the white shirt his mother had forced him into wearing. Lucas sat beside him watching TV constantly flicking through the channels. The different sounds flittering back and fourth annoyed him every single time.

"Lucas will you just pick something already!" He snapped as he chucked the remote control across the sofa.

"Jeez. Someone gets cranky when he doesn't see his girlfriend!" Lucas complained.

Mike let out a sigh. "I'm sorry man. Just miss her is all. I don't mean to get so grouchy and mad all the time it just feels how it did when she was gone before is all."

Lucas quickly switched off the TV and turned to face Mike. Usually Mike and Will were the two most open people of the group and would often have a heart to heart. However, on this occasion Lucas could relate to his girl problems.

"I get it man. But El's back and she's here to stay. So just have faith that you will see her soon. Because you will."

Mike nodded. "Yeah you're right. You can put the TV back on if you want."

Lucas ignored his gesture and paused for a few seconds before he launched into the next part of the conversation.

"I've got girl problems big time. Mad Max."

"Why what's happening there?" Mike asked puzzled.

"That's the thing. I've no idea. We kissed at the snowball we danced. But then after it was like nothing. At the sleepover I was so close to where she was lying but I didn't dare try to even so much as hold her hand. But what if she wanted me to and after that she was annoyed? Then the next day she didn't want to build a snowman on my team. Since then she hasn't called and now she's in California for Christmas and I won't see her most likely till School starts."

"But she told El she liked you." Mike said.

"What!" Lucas yelled in shock. "When?"

"El told me. It was the night after the snowball and she was calling a truce with El, she said clearly. I like Lucas."

Lucas fist pumped the air in celebration. The words were not said directly to him but it was a small victory for Lucas. He began to dance around the room in happiness as Mike laughed at him and told him he was a dork, this then erupted into a wrestling match until the noise of the basement door opening caused them to look up. Stood before them was Dustin Will and a mystery girl with a pink scarf draped round her head and a pair of black sunglasses. They separated quickly and looked around puzzled.

"Hey guys!" Will said with a big smile on his face. "This..." He gestured to the girl. "Is my cousin Ellie." Dustin smirked as he elbowed Will's arm. "She's really nice guys. But shy..."

"Ah trust Will to bring some random girl with him. That's all we need..." Lucas moaned.

"Well that's rude!" The girl snapped as she quickly pulled off her head scarf and glasses to reveal her true identity.

Will's face lit up. It was Eleven. Her face was beautifully made up, her dark brown hair curled behind her ears and she wore a simple pink dress with a bow draped round the middle. She smiled gleefully as her eyes connected with Mike's. Suddenly she was being swept off the ground as Mike grabbed her and playfully spun her around and she squealed in excitement.

"I can't believe you're here! I am so excited! I missed you so much!"

"I missed you too." She told him and draped him into a hug once she was safely back on the ground.

"Please promise us guys that tonight will not be the three of us watching you two suck face?" Dustin begged as he joined Lucas and Will on the sofa.

"I won't make promises I can't keep!" Eleven told them all with a giggle. "And friends don't lie!"

"Yeah." Mike agreed as he draped an arm round her shoulder. "I am with her."

The rest of them rolled their eyes in response.

"Anyway when you're Mom, serving the buffet? I'm hungry." Dustin declared as Mike and Eleven ignored them all and stared lovingly into each other's eyes.

Jonathan had took the kids to the Wheeler's house half an hour ago, Joyce and Hopper had immediately opened a pack of beers and ordered some Pizza which was now being devoured by themselves. Joyce laughed as Hopper finished telling her the story of Eleven and Mike declaring their relationship status to himself and Karen Wheeler.

"Oh bless her. That girl of yours is so innocent." Joyce laughed as she lit up a cigarette. "And sweet."

"Yeah she is. That's why I worry so much." Hopper told her. "Her and Mike, they're so young. Yet they care about each other so much."

"But they're kids Hopper, barely fourteen. They're not thinking about you know intimacy at this age."

"How do you know? After all we were thinking about it." Hopper told her as he lit up a cigarette himself.

"Well that was different." She said dismissively. "We we're young and stupid. it was just you know fun."

"It was more than just fun." Hopper told her. "I know we weren't exactly boyfriend and girlfriend. But from fourteen to sixteen we were a thing."

"Oh come on Hopper." Joyce argued. "We were young. It was just sex!"

"Not to me it wasn't!" Hopper said raising his voice. "God Joyce you never noticed. You came to me when you were feeling frisky, but it wasn't just sex for me. I cared about you and when I told you, you just rejected me. Then decided to get with Lannie!"

"Oh god here we go again! Lannie! You always hated that I chose him." Joyce screamed at him. "I was young Hopper!"

"Well you damn well did Joyce!" Hopper yelled furiously.

"You're an idiot! I always cared! I never stopped caring! Joyce told him as she jumped up from her seat in frustration. Hopper quickly got up from his seat kicking it as he rushed towards Joyce.

"This escalated too quickly!" She told him lowering her voice.

Hopper ignored her as he forcefully pulled her towards him and the two of them fiercely began to kiss and slowly began to drag away from the kitchen.

The Wheeler Christmas party was in full swing, the food was served a respectable buffet to which everyone including the kids had tucked into. The gang had found it very comical watching Eleven trying to eat a piece of chicken with her head scarf getting in the way. The disguise worked and no one paid any attention to 'Shy Ellie' in fact barely anyone even made an attempt of discussion with Eleven. The evening had passed by with no suspicion raised. However, with the entire gang there Mike and Eleven had scarcely spent a moment alone. It was only when Karen Wheeler got on the piano and lead the entire party into Christmas carols that the two of them shared a look and swiftly managed to sneak off back to the basement. Once there they cocooned themselves under the safety of the fort and they sat cross legged underneath, though Mike had grown a few inches taller in the last year and it was now a tight squeeze to fit them both. They

stared adoringly into each others eyes for a few moments.

"Are you comfortable enough?" He asked her.

"Mike. I am fine. " She insisted. "In fact. I brought you a present."

Mike looked at her in surprise as she pulled out a small package and passed it to him. It was wrapped in purple paper which he tore away eagerly. It was a red and black woolly scarf.

"A scarf. Thanks El!"

"Not just any Mike. I knitted it."

"You knit?" He said surprised.

"Yeah I learnt over the last year, whilst I was in hiding and I made it. Hoping one day I would see you again to give it you." She told him sweetly. "I was right. Because here we are."

Mike leaned over and gave her a quick kiss.

"I love it, it's great! Now it's your turn for a present!"

Eleven's eyes lit up as he passed her a small square box, she carefully lifted the lid off the box and she let out a small gasp. It was a black bracelet made from some form of thick string and looped round the middle of it was a small bottle top with black numbers, 11.

"I made it. I found the bottle top somewhere in the street cleaned it up and tied it with string. I thought you would like something other than a tattoo with your name on it."

Tears ran down her face and Eleven dabbed under her eyes conscious of her make up. Mike squeezed her hand gently. She smiled as she looked at him.

"I love it. Put it on for me?" She asked. Mike willingly draped the bracelet over her wrist, tightening it slightly.

She gently grabbed Mike's face and pulled his lips towards her as they shared a soft, deep kiss. This time it did not become as

passionate as the previous week on the sofa, this kiss was gentle and loving.

"Merry Christmas Mike." She told him once they had broke apart.

"Merry Christmas El."

Eleven glanced at her watch, it read nine o'clock.

"Cuddle in the fort for the last hour?" He suggested.

Eleven nodded as they stretched down into the covers and she shuffled herself into the nook of Mike's shoulder. They snuggled down staring up at the covers of the fort and he used his free hand to stroke her chestnut curls. They stayed pleasantly lying there, enjoying the magic of their first Christmas together.

The next hour passed by and soon it was 10:00pm, the time for Hopper to come and collect Eleven. But as it got later into the hour, there was still no sign of Hopper and Eleven began to worry, eventually 11:00pm arrived and their was still no sign of him. At this point, Jonathan was preparing to take Will home and he made the decision to bring Eleven back to their house to see if they could reach Hopper at the Police Station. After some soothing words from her friends and Mike's reassurance that it would be fine and a long kiss goodbye she had eventually been placed into Jonathan's car with Will.

"What if something bad happened to Daddy?" Eleven said worryingly.

"El I am sure there's a reasonable explanation." Jonathan assured her as he drove into the driveway of his home. "Once we get inside you can use the phone and we'll find where he is."

The three of them got out the car and walked up to the house, which was darkly lit from outside.

"That's weird, the lights are all out. Mum must have gone to bed early. " Will stated as he looked in at the house.

"She must have. " Jonathan agreed as he placed the key in the door. Once the door was opened he switched the light on in the kitchen.

The kitchen table was covered in pizza boxes, beer cans and Hopper's coat was draped across the back of the chair.

"Daddy's coat." Eleven pointed out. "He must still be here!"

"Yeah. But why is it so dark?" Will asked confused. "Where's Mom and Hopper?"

"I don't know bud." Jonathan replied as he began to wander into the hall. "MOM!"

Suddenly Joyce appeared from her bedroom, a dark robe on and her hair looked tousled and her face was red and her expression frantic.

"Boys you're home. Eleven. Is that the time already?"

"It's gone eleven and Hopper never showed up to pick up El." Jonathan told her as he glanced down at Joyce attired. "Dom were you sleeping? Where's Hopper?"

"Well Jonathan..." She began awkwardly but was cut off by the arrival of Hopper appearing out of Joyce bedroom he was dressed but his shirt was slightly unbuttoned, his hair ruffled and he wore no shoes.

"El. I am so sorry I was late to pick you up. I lost track of time." He said with an apologetic tone.

"Wait..." Jonathan said as he gestured from Joyce to Hopper and put the picture together in his mind. "Mom. Ewww. This is gross."

"Jonathan please stop." Joyce begged.

"Stop. I come hom with the kids after Hopper doesn't turn up. To find you two sleeping together." Jonathan shouted. "This is weird Mom!"

"Mom did you have sex with Hopper?" Will asked awkwardly his face screwed up in embarrassment.

Eleven who had been silent throughout suddenly chimed in.

"Daddy, what's sex?"

Everyone looked around awkwardly and Joyce placed her head in hands in humiliation.

"I'm going to bed." Jonathan announced as he headed to his room slamming the door shut behind him.

"El. This is a conversation for another day. I think we best get going now." Hopper informed them all as he retrieved his shoes from the hallway. "I'll call you later Joyce."

"Daddy is Will upset because the sex includes his Mom?"

"HOME NOW!" Hopper yelled in annoyance as he grabbed El and frogmarched her to the door.

A/N: I was trying out some awkwardness and humour with of course cute Eleven moments :P hope this chapter was good. Writing the next as we speak and as usual will update as quick as I can!

4. Chapter 4 The Sex Talk

Chapter 4 The Sex Talk

Another week had passed by since Mike and Eleven had seen each other and another holiday had arrived, New Years Eve. Tonight the gang, including Max who had arrived back from California would all gather at Will's for a sleepover, supervised by Joyce Byers. Mike had asked Eleven over the phone the night before if she could attend but she had said she would ask her Dad. He still had no idea if she was going or not, but Mike would just have to hope for the best. This only seeing each other once a week was really not working for him or El as she expressed the same worries. Mike was sat in his bedroom pacing back and fourth, just as she was considering calling Eleven to see if her Dad had given her permission to go to Will's there was a knock at his bedroom door. Mike yelled for whoever to come in, it was Nancy carrying a plate of cookies.

"Can I come in?" She asked holding up the cookies. "They're chocolate chip."

"Sure." He nodded as she sat down on his bed.

Nancy came and sat beside him placing the cookies between them, she watched as he tucked in nodding in approval.

"I made them. With Mom's help." She told him. "I thought you'd want one."

Mike looked at her suspiciously, Nancy was never this nice without an ulterior motive.

"What's the catch Nancy?"

"Nothing." She insisted. "Though I did want a quick chat with you."

Mike rolled his eyes as she continued to talk.

"So a couple of weeks ago, when your friends stayed over after the snowball, I overheard Dustin and Lucas talking..."

"What did they say? They're lying I swear." Mike insisted with a worried look.

"Mike stop. Anyway they were saying that you slept with El. Please can you elaborate. They don't mean you slept together like...Did you have sex with her Mike?"

"Nancy! Nook!" Will yelled outraged. "How could you even think that!"

"Mike." Nancy hissed as she looked towards the door. "Keep your voice down, Mom and Dad will hear. I am only asking. So what were they talking about?"

"We just laid together and cuddled under the fort. I am sorry, it's just I wanted to be near her to be close to her again. I missed her. But I promise we didn't do anything else. I am not even sure she understands about sex and the other things."

"It's OK." Nancy told him smiling. "I understand. I just wanted to talk to you about it because sex is a big deal and it's important. It should be with someone that you care about and maybe even love. Also you'll be fourteen soon Mike and people do start to think about this stuff, even though you're still young."

"Nancy. I don't want details of course. But how old were you? Do you regret it?"

Nancy paused for a second as if she were thinking about something and then erupted into a smile before shaking her head.

"No I don't regret it. I was sixteen and all though I hadn't been with Steve long, he made me feel safe and cared for. So it was the right decision."

"So I should be older?" Mike asked puzzled.

"Look Mike. I don't think you can pinpoint a right time and age, if you're older it's easier to handle. But whatever age you decide to sleep with someone always make sure it's safe and you use protection." She lectured.

"Bk. I know. I did do the sex education class."

Nancy nodded as she left the plate of cookies on his bed and got up to head towards the door.

"Nancy. Thank you."

Hopper sat in his cabin at the table glancing across the room at the phone, half expecting it to dial and resisting the urge to ring anyone himself. It had been a week since Jonathan, Will and Eleven had walked in and saw himself and Joyce coming out of her bedroom and Joyce had tried to ring him at home and the station several times. He had avoided her calls. The truth was he still hadn't explained the situation to Eleven and he was unsure how to approach the situation. She had asked so many times after that evening that he eventually lost his patience and told her the subject was no longer up for discussion. Sleeping with Joyce the first time would have been a bad idea, but three times after causing him to be late for picking up Eleven was just plain stupid. For many reasons. Doug had barely been dead two months and she was no doubt still grieving, the kids were still adjusting to life after closing the gate to the upside down and the boys had looked equally as confused about the situation as Eleven had that night. Yet there was one insensible part of Hopper that had enjoyed that night so much, in fact it was all he could think about since. It brought back feelings for Joyce that he hadn't even realised were still there. But explaining all this was very difficult for him. He was broke from his thoughts by Eleven wandering over and placing a hand on his shoulder.

"Daddy. Are you Ok?"

He gave her a comforting hug. "I'm fine kid. Was there something you wanted?"

"Yes. Will invited me to his sleepover tonight...and it's just going to be all my friends no one else. And Joyce will be there watching us. Please can I go?" She begged.

Hopper thought to himself for a moment before he nodded. "Sure, let me know what time and I'll drop you off. But I'll be picking you up tomorrow."

Eleven lunged at him, hugging him tight. "Thank you Daddy."

She was about to walk off back to her room, when Hopper stopped her. It was time for him to be honest with her and discuss the subject he was avoiding.

"El. Sit down sweetie."

She sat down opposite him obediently feeling slightly unsure of the conversation ahead.

"I think we should talk about what you, Will and Jonathan saw between me and Joyce." He started.

"When Will said about sex?" She asked uncertainly.

"Yes." He nodded. "Well the thing is El. I use to when I was a lot younger be with Joyce so this occasion where we had sex was not the first time. We have a past, you know we had a romance."

"What's sex Daddy?"

Hopper let out a huge sigh, struggling to find the words.

"You know we talked about the male parts and female parts down there." He said pointing to the lower region. El nodded in response. "Well a couple, a man and women they use them to have sex. The man part the penis goes into the woman's vagina."

Eleven looked at him uncertainly, but Hopper continued.

"And then they move around and have sex. Sometimes people do this to have babies but when they are older so not at your age. And sometimes like me and Joyce did it's just for enjoyment and because you care about and love someone."

"So you love Joyce?" Eleven asked puzzled.

"No." Hopper corrected her. "I do care for her very much though. As you do for Mike."

"So me and Mike should have sex?"

"No!" Hopper yelled before he lowered his voice to a reasonable tone. "I mean I know you care about Mike, but the two of you are not even 14 yet. You're too young to have sex. But when you do decide you need to use condoms and be on birth control. Do you understand this? It stops you getting pregnant and it's important!"

Eleven nodded as he finished. "I understand Daddy."

"So you're not thinking of sex any time soon!" He advised her.

Eleven shook her head. "No but when I do me and Mike will discuss it. He will know more."

Hopper acknowledged this answer with a simple nod. With their conversation over, Eleven kissed his cheek and went off to get ready for the sleepover.

"Jonathan where's my purse?" Joyce yelled from the kitchen as she searched around the counter tops. There was no reply. Tonight was Will's first sleepover with his friends at his house since the possession from the Upside down and she was determined to give him a good night, especially after her behaviour with Hopper the week before. However, none of this would be helped if she couldn't find her purse.

"Jonathan." She yelled again there was no response. Losing her patience Joyce marched from the kitchen and into Jonathan's room, without knocking. This was a big mistake. Lying across his bed were Nancy and Jonathan half dressed.

"MOM!" He screamed as he jumped up from on top of Nancy. Nancy meanwhile placed her hands across her exposed bra and stomach. "Why wouldn't you knock first?"

"I am sorry Jonathan. " She babbled as she turned around to face the hallway. "I was just going to ask you if you had seen my purse?"

"Well it wouldn't be in here."

Nancy must have gotten dressed as she suddenly announced that she was going to pick up Mike and swiftly walked past Joyce apologising as she went. Joyce waited until she had left to turn around and confront Jonathan, who was now dressed and stood by his bed a

furious look on his face.

"What the hell Mom!" He asked. "Since when do you come into my room unannounced?"

"Excuse me. Watch your tone. I'm your mother." Joyce warned him. "Besides this is my house and I didn't expect to come in here and find you getting it on with Nancy Wheeler."

"Well you were pretty busy with Hopper last week." Jonathan pointed out.

"Jonathan please. I explained it to you and Will. Will was fine with it, what's your problem?"

Jonathan let out a long sigh before he finished. "I am just concerned that it's going to be too much change for Will. Everything was so chaotic over the last year I don't want him to also have to adjust to you having a new boyfriend and..."

Joyce stopped him there as she walked over to him and grabbed his hand comfortingly. "Jonathan, I'm not going to start dating Hopper. I am not ready for another relationship."

"Then what was last week about?" He asked puzzled.

"I was lonely." She admitted sadly. "And Hopper is familiar to me. I use to date him when I was younger."

"I'm sorry I gave you a hard time Mom. I didn't realise. " Jonathan told her as he pulled her into a hug.

"Thanks Hun. And I am sorry I interrupted you and Nancy. Next time I'll knock or maybe we could have a signal so I know when..."

Joyce didn't get a chance to finish the sentence as Jonathan suddenly reminded her about her purse. "I think it was on the coffee table Mom."

Joyce laughed as she wandered out of the room and into the living room, where as Jonathan had told her the purse lay on the pine table. She grabbed it with a triumphant fist in the air. As Joyce made for

the front door she heard a car pull up in the driveway, glancing out the window she could see Hopper's police truck with Eleven sat in the front seat beside him. Worry suddenly hit her. She had made several attempts to contact Hopper over the last week, all attempts were ignored. Joyce had not expected to see him tonight, ruffling her hair and grabbing her keys off the hook she decided to face the situation. Once outside Hopper and Eleven were already walking towards the door.

"Hi El" She said hugging her as she approached her. "So I take it by the back pack you're joining tonight's sleepover?"

Eleven smiled gleefully.

"Well head on inside, Willis in his room and Max is with him. Mike will be here soon Nancy just left to get him."

"Thanks." Eleven told her as she ran off towards the door before calling back. "Bye Daddy!"

"You behave kid!" He yelled as she ran off inside the house.

"So. You let her come. Good she'll be fine here, I'll be here all night."

Hopper looked at her with an awkward smile. "So. You've tried ringing me and I'm sorry I haven't replied..."

"Hopper it's fine. The situation was very awkward and the kids were there. Jonathan and Will are fine I talked to them about it. How's El been?"

"She's fine. We talked about sex and I briefly explained the situation." Hopper assured Joyce. "But I do just want to add. That I enjoyed last week."

Joyce smiled at him. "I did too."

"I like you Joyce. I care about you." He admitted.

Joyce looked at him startled. "Listen Hopper. I care about you as well, but I'm not ready to go straight into a relationship or dating. "

Hopper took her hands in his. "So lets not do that. Why don't we just keep it low key spend time together and have some good sex."

Joyce raised her eyebrows scandalously. "You sure you're OK with that? Very sordid after all?"

"Absolutely fine with me Joyce."

"OK. " She agreed. "Sounds good to me"

"Cool. Well I have to get to work, but I'll call you later." Hopper told her with a sly smile.

"Cool. Bye Hop." Joyce said as she flashed him a smile and walked over to her car.

"You're Mom and Hopper! Omg that must have been awkward!" Dustin laughed as he leant on the back of Will's desk chair.

It was a little after 6:00pm and Dustin and Mike had arrived with Nancy half an hour ago, Eleven and him had cuddled together on Will's bed since then. Lucas had not yet arrived, so the gang had gathered together in Will's room catching up on the events of the past week.

"Super weird." Max added. "How did you and El deal with that?"

"Daddy avoided the subject all week. But he explained what sex means to me now and I get it." Eleven announced as Mike practically choked in shock.

"He told you about sex?" Mike repeated shifting in his spot.

"Yes." Eleven answered turning to look at Mike. "But he says it's sometimes for fun."

"Well none of us would know El." Max told her with a giggle. "We're all too young."

"I don't know. Mike looks like he's getting ready to pounce. " Dustin laughed as he erupted into his annoying purr sound.

"Quit it Dustin!" Mike yelled as he threw a pillow across the room, it missed and went straight for the door just as Lucas was walking into the room.

"Pillow fights starting already?" He joked.

"Hey Lucas." Will smiled. "So glad you're here. Now we can change the subject."

Lucas looked around the room, Dustin and Max had smirks on their face whilst the rest of the group had shy looks on their face.

"What did I miss?"

"Hopper fucked Joyce and Mike and Eleven are thinking about sex!" Dustin said mischievously.

"DUSTIN!" The rest of the gang yelled in annoyance.

"Wow. I'm never going to be the last person here again. Well Will it may please you to know that you're Mom said the Pizza is here and we should all head into the kitchen."

"Great. Let's go." Will cheered as he rushed out his room, followed swiftly by Dustin then Max who shared a quick smile with Lucas before they left the room. The last to get up were Eleven and Mike who clung back as Mike pulled her arm back before she got up.

"What's wrong Mike? You don't want pizza?"

"No I do." Mike said. "It's just we should talk alone for a second."

Eleven sat back down on the bed next to him. "What is it Mike?"

"This talk you're Dad had with you about sex. Did he explain what happens when you do it?" Mike asked nervously.

"About the penis in the vagina?" Eleven asked in her innocent voice.

Mike turned a deep shade of red. "Yeah that's what happens. Did he tell you about condoms?"

Eleven paused for a moment puzzled. "Yes but where do they go?"

"On the penis to stop the sperm from going into the woman to make babies." Mike told her finding the conversation severely uncomfortable.

"Oh. OK." Eleven nodded. "But Daddy told me that we're too young for sex."

"Well yeah. When the time is right and we're ready maybe at some point it will happen." Mike suggested.

Eleven looked at Mike smiling. "Because I love you and that would show you I love you?"

Mike's eyes lit up with excitement as he processed what she said. "You love me?"

"Yes I do love you Mike!" She assured him as she gently squeezed his hand.

"I love you too!" He told her as he pulled her into his arms and pressed his lips to hers.

There kiss was long and passionate, his hands ran up and down the small of her back and she dragged her fingers through the back of his hair. Mike was just about to pull her down onto the bed so they were lying horizontal, when the sound of Joyce calling them from the kitchen shook them back to reality. They pressed there noses together as they giggled nervously.

"Lets go get pizza El." He told her as he grabbed her hand and they ran off out of the bedroom.

A/N: Sorry this was a bit longer and it focused a little less on Mike and Eleven but I needed to have these conversations for future chapters. Next chapter will be this sleepover and will have lots of Millevan and some Max and Lucas. Thanks for reading!

5. Chapter 5 New Year Terror and Delight

Chapter 5 New Year Terror and Delight

A/N: Apologies for the delay in writing this. I have been very busy and have re-wrote this chapter twice! But finally happy with it so enjoy!

It was eight o'clock and the gang had finished demolishing the pizza's provided by Joyce, however, the evening plans were not off to the best start. Joyce had been called into work by Donald last minute, leaving Jonathan and Nancy in charge. In turn, this had ruined Nancy and Jonathan's plans to go out to a party, despite his protests to his mother Joyce had headed off to work. Therefore, the couple sat in the living room sulking and trying to keep away from the group who were making loud amounts of noise in the kitchen.

"Will you please stop!" Jonathan called into the kitchen. "No one cares about Wolverine and his bone claws!"

"He did before he discovered girls and sex," Dustin muttered under his breath causing the gang to laugh aloud.

"Seriously. This is how we are spending our evening, with my brother and his friends!" Nancy complained to Jonathan. Will suddenly bounded over from the kitchen an irritated look on his face.

"Then go! We don't need a baby sitter!" He told them defiantly.

Jonathan looked at him skeptically. "Well, Mom insists. And I am not risking anything happening to you!"

"Nothings going to happen!" Will whined.

"Yeah!" Mike chimed in. "We won't even leave the house!"

"All the bad stuff is gone!" Eleven reminded them. "And friends promise."

Nancy smiled at her innocence. At times Eleven still struggled with putting certain sentences together. She placed a hand comfortingly on Jonathan's.

"The kids will be ok for a couple hours. We could still make the party and be home for ten!"

Jonathan looked from Nancy to the kids and then back again before he quickly relented. "Fine. But if you leave the house then you're in the deepest shit!"

Will did a triumphant fist pump in the air before promising to obey

the rules. With that decided Nancy and Jonathan quickly left the house. Once his car was safely out the driveway, Dustin who had been watching out the window suddenly turned to the rest of the gang and suggested his plan.

"Right anyone else up for ghost storytelling at Fort Byers?"

Lucas and Max gave an agreeable yes in response, whilst Will, Eleven and Mike all protested.

"No way Dustin. You heard what Jonathan said. " Will reminded him.

"Yes, and what he won't know won't hurt him. Besides, we'll be back before he gets home."

"Dustin this is stupid!" Mike argued.

Will and Eleven shared a concerned look. The two of them shared a mutual dislike for the woods after their personal experiences being lost.

"We'll take flashlights!" Dustin told them. "And we'll stick together. Plus we have El!"

"She's not your personal bodyguard," Mike said vehemently. "Plus Will is not happy either. Right, Will?"

They all turned to look at Will who stuttered with his words nervously. Mike rolled his eyes, Will was such a people pleaser and clearly didn't want to offend or annoy anyone. Eleven put her arm around Will comfortingly.

"Will if you're ok with it then I'll go. We'll all be together and we'll keep each other safe. Friends don't lie."

Will nodded at her somewhat confidently. "Ok, I am in!"

"YES WILLIAM! Dustin cheered triumphantly. "Right everyone grab some flashlights, coats, snacks anything we may need. We have two hours till Jonathan and Nancy are home!"

Once Will had grabbed the house keys and they were all bundled in their coats and armed with flashlights they ventured out the back of Will's house and through the woods to Fort Byars. They huddled in separate little groups, grasping their way through the dark. Max, Lucas, and Dustin lead the way at the front whilst Eleven hung back clutching Mike hand tightly the whole time, Will remained somewhere between the two groups trying not to appear scared.

"Mike," Eleven whispered as they walked. "I am scared. I want to go back."

"It's ok El. Not far to go now." He said squeezing her hand reassuringly.

Moments later they were at Fort Byars and the six of them struggled

to push their way into the makeshift fort. Despite it being spacious, the four boys had grown in the last two years and were on the taller and larger side. Eleven and Mike had pushed in first and sat himself on the bed within the fort and Will pushed along beside them. Dustin, Max, and Lucas landed in a clumsily lump on the floor, with Max complaining about Dustin sitting on her feet.

"Quit whining Max!" Dustin complained as he shuffled as far away from her as possible.

"Well, this is nice and cozy." Will said sarcastically.

"And cold," Max added as she was huddled near the entrance shivering. Lucas quickly removed his coat and offered it to her.

"Thank you, Lucas."

Lucas carefully draped it over her shoulders as they shared a quick look.

"Anyway. Who's telling a ghost story first?" Mike asked as he draped the blanket on the bed around himself and Eleven, who also shivered from the cold. "How about you Dustin? It was your stupid idea after all,"

"Yeah whats your amazing story?" Will demanded to know.

Dustin held his flashlight under his face to create a spooky, ominous glow. "Well, it starts on a gloomy...dark night.."

"How original," Lucas muttered under his breath. The gang hastily hushed him.

"Anyway." Dustin continued. "It was a dark night. But not in Hawkins. The story is set in Curly County. The Mental Institute where all the devout insane are held captured. They say some of the most sickened people live within there. Especially one individual. Barrett the Bone Cruncher. They call him this because his favorite thing to do is capture people. Kill them and then skin them to keep their bones. Barrett had at one time the best collection of bones. Until he killed his entire family including his siblings and was found kept in the basement of his family home. The Hawkins police found Barrett and took him away. He was placed in the mental institute under maximum security. But Barrett vowed to one day set himself free and come back and seek revenge on the town of Hawkins. One day on a dark, gloomy night very much like this one, Barrett seized his opportunity for escape. He slew his guards with his bare knuckles and took their arms to use as a weapon. They say he wandered into the woods flaying the arms around as he went. These very woods we sit in. Mad with rage and searching for the Hawkins Police. After

days of being in the cold with no food and no water, Barrett froze to death. But they say to this day his ghost still haunts the woods at night. They say he attacks the innocent wanders and when the wind howls people swear it is Barrett screaming out through the night sneaking up on..."

Dustin story was suddenly interrupted by the screeching of an owl nearby. The loud noise caused Max to jump with fright and before anyone could stop her she was up and running out of the fort screaming as she went.

"Max stop!" Lucas yelled after her but as he looked out the fort she was already out of sight. "She's gone," He told everyone.

"She doesn't know the woods as we do," Will said worryingly. "She'll get lost."

"I told you this was a bad idea, Dustin!" Mike yelled at him.

"Well, you still followed me didn't you!" Dustin argued.

"Let's split up and go find her!" Lucas urged looking at his watch "It's 8:45pm already!"

"Fine," Mike said taking on the leader role. "Lucas, Will, Dustin you head the way she went. I and El will stay here. El looks shaken up"

El was presently lying across the bed shaking and muttering nonsense to herself. The three of them nodded in response and headed off into the dark. Mike kneeled down beside El and she shook as she cried with fear.

"El. What is it?"

"Papa." She muttered as her eyes rolled back closed.

El was back at Hawkins Lab, in her little room with its little rainbows on the door. Only she wasn't her usual self she was younger and besides her was her sister. Stood in the doorway was Papa watching as a woman, a stranger was dragged away down the hall screaming 'Jane' as she went. El was far too young to quite understand but her sister sat beside her looking at Papa with a worried look.

"Papa who was that lady? And why is she calling Eleven Jane?"

"Don't worry Eight. That lady is gone. You and Eleven are safe now, she won't be back to harm you again!" Papa told her as he placed an arm around the two of them. Eleven clung to Papa and as she did she heard a distant screaming of terror coming from another room. A woman screaming.

"EL!"

Eleven eyes flashed open and she was back in Fort Byars and Mike sat in front of her shouting her name and shaking her.

"El are you ok?"

Eleven slowly sat up pulling herself into Mike's arms. "I remembered something. Or it was a dream. I'm not sure."

"What did you see?" Mike asked her quietly.

"Papa. And Mama. She came for me and my sister was there. It must have been before he..." El voice trailed off as she burst into tears. Mike hugged her closely to him and stroked her hair.

"It's ok El. You're safe now. No one's going to hurt you."

Eleven and Mike clung together for what felt like the longest time. Eventually, the weather outside turned from a light shower of rain to a heavy downpour, causing a strong breeze to spread through the fort. Eleven shivered against Mike in the cold and he pulled the blanket around her as tight as he could. He reassured her that the others would be back soon and by this point she had begun to calm down and her tears were running silently down her face. Suddenly they heard a noise outside and Will and Dustin came running to the fort.

"We found Max!" Will said triumphantly stopping as he caught sight of Mike cuddling a distraught Eleven. "Is everything ok?"

Mike nodded at them discreetly. "So wheres Max and Lucas?"

"We left them back there sucking face. I told them we would meet them back at Will's." Dustin told them as he struggled to keep his hood up in the rain. "We should get going it like 9:15pm already!"

"What!" Mike yelled. "We need to go now! Right now!"

Mike pulled Eleven up lightly onto her feet keeping the blanket around her as she still shook, Will didn't seem to mind too much as he leaned over the side and helped her walk along. When emotionally drained Eleven struggled to stay on her feet and walk, but with the help of the three boys, she managed to walk along. With Dustin leading the way at the front with the flashlight and Will and Mike pulling Eleven along they managed to get back to Will's house within twenty minutes. Once back they all dried off, Eleven changed into her pajamas and lay huddled on the sofa next to Mike who kept his arm around her securely. Dustin and Will stayed stood beside the windows in the front room waiting and pacing for Lucas and Max to arrive back. Finally, at 9:50pm, ten minutes before Nancy and Jonathan were due back Dustin spotted them walking up the driveway. Flinging the door open and awaiting them with towels and

the hair dryer, Dustin was filled with regret.

"Max I am so sorry I was such an asshole. I didn't mean to scare you!" He said throwing his arms around her awkwardly.

Max swiftly pushed him away before smiling at him sweetly. "Don't worry Dustball. I am fine. Now excuse me, boys, I need to change and dry my hair."

Max marched off to the bathroom and Lucas watched with a satisfied smile as she walked away.

"Dustin. Thank you so much. If it weren't for your stupidity I wouldn't have kissed Max again."

Will and Mike laughed as Dustin gestured a thumbs up his way. By 10:00pm, Nancy and Jonathan arrived back at the house and the gang were all changed into their pajamas and sat around the TV with Dick Clark's New Years Rockin Eve on.

"You guys are very civilized." Jonathan said suspiciously as they walked in.

"Well we're watching horror films." Dustin lied. "But we got scared so we turned it off."

Nancy shared a look with Jonathan and the suspicion was dropped until they sighted Eleven sat on the sofa with Mike still looking noticeably shaken up.

"El. Are you ok?" Jonathan asked with concern.

"She's fine." Mike insisted as he tightened his grip around her. His natural instinct to protect her.

"Are you sure?" Nancy asked rushing over to her. "She looks really pale." Nancy placed a hand over Eleven's forehead. "And she's freezing!"

"It's cold." Eleven muttered speaking for the first time in a while.

"We need to warm you up!" Nancy told her firmly as she rubbed her hand over Eleven's. "Let's get you another blanket and some Coco."

Eleven and Mike smiled at Nancy in appreciation. Half an hour later she was wrapped in two blankets and sipping her way through a steaming mug of Coco.

"Is that better?" Nancy asked her feeling her skin.

Eleven nodded. "I feel good. Thank you Nancy."

The rest of the evening went by with more merriment and no further talk of the events at Fort Byars. Eventually, Eleven warmed up enough to only need one blanket and was soon chirped up and enjoy playing games with everyone, during this time Joyce had rung to say she would be needed at the store till late so would not be home till

later. Finally, the countdown to midnight arrived and the gang including Nancy and Jonathan gathered in the living room patiently waiting for the ball drop. The time struck midnight, 1985 was here and the gang all cheered together. Dustin and Will stood next to each other and shared a hug and a cheer whilst the lovebirds all shared a kiss. Bundled on the sofa, Mike couldn't believe his luck that he was ending and beginning a year with El, miles away from last years New Years. Sat with heads clung together and his lips near her cheek he sweetly said.

"Happy New year El. I love you!"

A/N: Thanks for reading :) I promise that I will update quicker from now on. More Mileven and Jopper coming soon and I will be exploring El's 'dreams' more.